

The Times Dispatch

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SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 1914.

THE HERALD AND PROHIBITION.
The leading article in the current issue of *The Religious Herald* is a reply to a recent editorial of ours, in which we stated our views on the enabling act and outlined our policy for the coming prohibition campaign.

At the outset we wish to acknowledge the temperate, fair and courteous manner in which the *Herald* discusses the topic. It is a pleasure to debate an issue with a contemnor so just and reasonable. It is a regret that the sanity and good sense of the editor of the *Herald* do not play a larger part in shaping the course of the antislavery forces. The result would undoubtedly be for the progress of the temperance cause.

The *Herald's* answer to our articles we reproduce it full in another column—that as we mistook the sentiment of Virginia at the time when the Mann and Byrd laws were passed, so now we mistake public opinion in relation to the enabling act. The *Herald* believes that "we might as well say farewell in this State to the doctrine of local option," and it believes that the enabling act will be approved by the voters of Virginia.

We could wish that our views of the prohibition outlook would prove far more mistaken than were our fears of the Byrd and Mann laws. We could but wish that every man in Virginia were so aroused to the dangers of strong drink that none would ever use intoxicants. Nothing could do more good for the future of Virginia in manhood and prosperity.

Yet we believe our apprehensions well founded, and, first of all, because the present issue is far different from what it was when the Mann and Byrd laws went into effect. These laws were aimed to close the saloons in the country and in the small towns. Passed when no restrictions on the transportation of intoxicants were even contemplated in Virginia, they operated to give drinking-men freedom from the obnoxious presence of the saloon without denying these men the privilege of getting all the liquor they desired from mail-order houses. In September the voters are not to decide whether certain districts are to be without saloons while liquor is sold under license in near-by cities and may be sent by express upon a few moments' notice. The voters are rather to determine whether the entire State shall be without licensed saloons, with the certainty of antislavery laws enacted under authority of the Webb act, which was not in existence when either the Mann or the Byrd laws went into operation.

Prohibition, in theory at least, aims to keep a man from getting liquor altogether, whereas, in the past, our laws have only made it more difficult. The change in policy is one that may involve a change of heart on the part of voters and will certainly involve a much more complex question of law enforcement than we have ever faced before.

More than this, we are now attempting to end the liquor traffic in large cities. Instead of working to keep bars and blind-tigers from the countryside and from the small towns, we are to attempt the enforcement of prohibitory laws in one city of 125,000, in another of 75,000, and in several others of 30,000 and more. We need not point out the tremendous demand this makes upon the police and the law officers of the State. We cannot measure the possible success of prohibition in the cities by the effect of the Byrd and Mann laws in the cities and small towns. Sentiment which would enforce present restrictive statutes would not necessarily enforce prohibitory laws, unfounded fears as to the effect of the one are not at all to the point in passing on the expediency of the other.

But besides considering the fundamental difference in the issues involved the *Herald* must admit that we have practical illustrations for our instructions in forecasting the operation of the new law in Virginia. And these illustrations, to use the mildest possible phrase, are not encouraging. In the cities of Tennessee and Georgia prohibition is an utter failure in no large city of the South has it ever been a success. If it is better enforced in North Carolina than in any other State it is largely because the North State is without large centers of population. Savannah, Memphis and Atlanta stuck in our mind as dismal warnings. In the first named, saloon-keepers mock at the law. When sixteen of them were recently arrested on the complaint of an outraged citizen, the facts fully proved, they were acquitted by a jury that did not even leave the box. Can we measure a contest under conditions of this sort with what Virginia has achieved in rural districts? Can we expect victory to be as easy or sentimental as strong? Are we going far astray when we fear that what has happened in Atlanta may happen in Richmond?

Apart from the difference in the issues involved and the tremendous problem of the cities, we hazard far more than ever was at stake before. The real right, we repeat, will be in the cities where little by little victories for temperance have been won. The *Herald*

can remember when Richmond, with 50,000 people had 250 bars, and it joined with us in the campaign that reduced the number to 150; it can attest the improvement in conditions here and, we are sure, would gladly have joined us in supporting the bill before the last Assembly to limit the number in every city by State law. The *Herald* will, therefore, bear us out in saying that what has been gained in the cities has been hardly won. By prohibition it will be menaced, surely, quickly, inevitably. Grant, for instance, that we were able to pass and enforce an antislavery law—and to that end we labored during the Assembly of 1914 and will always labor—and grant that, as a consequence of such a law, prohibition in the small towns would be made reasonably effective, as we understand it is in like places in North Carolina. Would it not follow that in these cities where the number of those who violate the law is absolutely, if not relatively, larger than in the counties, the difficulties of maintaining the law and detecting violations of it will be far greater? And would not the very difficulties of enforcement and the consequent prospect of procuring intoxicants draw to these cities the rough drinking element from the entire State? The *Herald* has perhaps seen as have we, the bacchanalia enacted in wet cities adjacent to large dry areas, and from this it can visualize what we may anticipate, with all the added disgrace that comes from secret violations of the law.

Whether the Asquith ministry will be able to weather the storm depends, after all, upon the success of Carson's appeal to the English voters. If, as any gallery play or any pompos strut, he is able to catch the fancy of the average Englishman, the Liberal majority will crumble, and Asquith will be forced out of office. If, on the other hand, Carson be promptly jailed and tried, in case of overt action, the chances are that Asquith will hold his own. At best, this aspect of the situation is delicate, however trifling the rising itself may be.

The home rule bill has been the death warrant of more than one Premier. If Asquith goes down, he will but share Gladstone's fate; if he stands, he will have excelled the record of the great Premier.

PERMISSION TO VIOLATE LAW.
Charles W. Morse is not the proper man to speak too harshly of illegal acts of corporations and trust magnates. When he declares that the New Haven Railroad has been permitted to act illegally for years, and is merely objecting now to being ordered to stop, he directs attention as much to himself and his own illegal operations as to the New England corporation. People are apt to think more of Mr. Morse's acts than of Mr. Mellon's.

Nevertheless, the financier's comments on the New Haven situation are interesting. Asked if he intended to use the word "illegal," he replied in the affirmative and added:

"Mr. Mellon told me that he had permission from President Roosevelt to do illegal acts."

Remembering again who Mr. Morse is, most people will be inclined to doubt the strict accuracy of this statement. They will not believe it just because the man with a remarkable capacity for recovering his health states it as a fact. On the other hand, now that the possibility has been suggested to them, they will be unable to reject it without further thought. They may doubt, but they will not disbelieve, either, because of the source from which it comes, for memory comes to tempt their credulity. They will remember that President Roosevelt did give a certain corporation permission to perform an illegal act, and defended, may even boast, of the act. If he gave the Steel Trust permission to gobble the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, though the gobbling involved a flagrant violation of the Sherman antitrust act, why may he not have given the New Haven permission to violate that and other laws? There is not proof that he did, but there is the charge that he did, and there is the evidence that he was capable of it.

Under these circumstances, while we cannot accept Mr. Morse's statement as true, we cannot reject it utterly.

WILL ULSTER DO IT?
Sir Edward Carson and the Irish Unionists have been boasting for months that

"Ulster will fight
And Ulster will be right."

Now they are apparently about to have a chance to prove it. Unaged until he is weary, and assured the support of the Laborites and Irish Nationalists, Mr. Asquith has declined to refer the home rule question to the nation. Very quietly and very seriously he has told the Unionists that if the Ulstermen do not accept the terms of his compromise, they need expect no further consideration. They could like it or lump it. And to see how they like it, he has evidently given orders for military preparations.

We suspect that some of our readers may not recall at the moment the history of the long wrangle which threatens now to end in what the sensationalists are calling "civil war." Busy as they are with the news of the coming baseball season, and vainly trying to find out who's where in Mexico, we cannot blame our readers.

In a few words, the present Ulster "uprising" is the outcome of bad feelings more than two centuries old. After William III, drove James II's army from the Boyne, he subdued Ireland, and attempted to assure permanent peace by peopling the north of the island with colonies of Protestants, to support those who had come over in the days of the Commonwealth. These settled in Ulster, and have remained through the centuries loyal to England and to England's church. But they have never affiliated with the Irish or other counties, and have remained a people apart. Favoured of the English ruling house, and always pluming themselves for their patriotism, the Ulstermen have suffered little from depression which has made the cause of Ireland dear to every lover of freedom.

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To those obtuse ones who cannot see the joke in the Ambassador Page-Senator Chamberlain incident, we will say that it is Senator Chamberlain.

Accordingly, as the sentiment for

home rule has grown in Ireland, Ulster has become more and more at odds with the rest of Erin, until now, with a Liberal ministry in power, pledged to a home rule bill, and dependent upon the Irish for maintenance in power, the Ulstermen promise rebellion if they are forced to give up their seats in the House of Commons for a place in the proposed Irish Parliament at Dublin.

Headed by Sir Edward Carson, who should certainly have been arraigned for treason, and supported by Bonny Law, the unofficial Unionist leader, the Ulstermen have sought to arouse England to repudiation of the Liberal party and its policies. They, too, are Englishmen, they wash, and are not to be turned over to the Dublin Parliament. Down with a party which would deny a Briton his blood! Bonny Law has bawled in this mournful string, and has gone over the wrongs of the Orangemen, but he has not been able to meet the Liberals, or to placate the heterogeneous leader. As for Carson, he has been told to put up or shut up, and has gone to Ulster to "raise the standard of protest."

He may be able to muster a few malcontents and put up a fight, though we doubt it. But, at best, his rebellion will speedily be repressed. "Hell-will in Ireland will probably mean nothing more than longer terms of court and new recruits for the prison forces. It will be put down quickly.

Whether the Asquith ministry will be able to weather the storm depends, after all, upon the success of Carson's appeal to the English voters. If, as any gallery play or any pompos strut, he is able to catch the fancy of the average Englishman, the Liberal majority will crumble, and Asquith will be forced out of office. If, on the other hand, Carson be promptly jailed and tried, in case of overt action, the chances are that Asquith will hold his own. At best, this aspect of the situation is delicate, however trifling the rising itself may be.

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INDIANA AND VIRGINIA PRIMARIES.
Indiana Democrats have taken the first step toward swinging the State into the line of those Commonwealths which nominate candidates for office by primary election instead of by conventions. All the old arguments against the system, so well known in Virginia, where they have been worn threadbare, were presented by the convention advocates, but the resolutions committee of the State convention, by a narrow margin, estimated them at their true worth, as they have long been estimated in this State, and voted 7 to 6 for the primary. To meet the only legitimate objection to the primary plan the committee provided for a State convention for "counsel, organization, and declaration of the party principles." So Indiana Democracy is committed to the primary principle by party convention action as Virginia Democracy was committed to it.

While Indiana is making a beginning, it has made a better beginning. The apparent compromise in favor of the primary system may think they have given up something to gain a foothold for the system, and its opponents may think they have saved something from the wreckage but the reverse is the truth. Here in Virginia the lack of a convention has been one of the serious drawbacks to the successful operation of the system and its opponents know it. Knowing it, they have opposed and still oppose setting a convention.

Those Indiana Democrats who have taken Tom Taggart by the throat and forced him to allow his convention to declare for a State-wide direct primary law have done better than they know. They have secured the endorsement of a direct primary, and, at the same time, have kicked into the scrap heap one of the really serious objections to the system, so that it cannot rise to plague the party in the future. We were not so fortunate in our start here in Virginia, but we started earlier, and it may be that we will have the ideal combination of primary nominations and convention formulated platform before Indiana acts on the resolution of the Democratic platform.

Billy Sunday boasts that he could depopulate Satan's domains in ten days' time. When he gets to New York he will have the opportunity to prove or disprove his words.

Villa might be willing to have peace if the moving picture operators would leave Mexico.

"What the Republican party needs more than anything else just at this time," says the Washington Herald, "is a calamity howler who can deliver the goods." That might help some, but what the Republican party really needs most is some Republicans.

Woman Mayor who caught her husband violating liquor license laws says he must be prosecuted with the others. Until we know something of the domestic life of that couple we refuse to join in the chorus of praise.

In some parts of Switzerland all the dead are buried at the public expense. There are any number of people in this country who could be buried right now at public expense.

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